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*MODERNISM AND CATHOLICISM*¹

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In the instrument providing for the endowment of the series of lectures which bears his name Judge Dudley directed that the third lecture should be for "The Detecting and Convicting and Exposing the Idolatry of the Romish Church, their Tyranny, Usurpations, Damnable Heresies, Fatal Errors, Abominable Superstitions, and other Crying Wickednesses in their high places; and finally that the Church of Rome is that mystical Babylon, that man of sin, that apostate Church, spoken of in the New Testament."

It is upon this topic that I am to speak this evening. The times have changed since the lectureship was founded in 1750. Many of the animosities of the fathers are no longer felt by us, and particularly in religious matters union has taken the place of division, sympathy of hostility, coöperation of rivalry. We are interested in other things. Our sense of proportion has changed. We are farther away from the days of persecution, and less nervous about many movements and institutions that our fathers dreaded unspeakably. The spirit of toleration has taken hold upon us all, and Protestants can think and speak kindly of men of other faiths, and can coöperate gladly and heartily with them as opportunity offers for the promotion of good ends dear to them all.

With this spirit I am myself in cordial sympathy, and it is as an historian, not as a polemic, that I shall treat the subject assigned me. I wish to consider as dispassionately as possible the great system that still remains essentially unchanged, in spite of all the vicissitudes that have overtaken the affairs of men since Judge Dudley made his will a hundred and fifty years ago.

¹ The Dudley Lecture, delivered at Harvard University, May 13, 1909.

The present situation in the Roman Catholic church caused by the open conflict between conservative and liberal tendencies within its communion is most interesting and instructive. Not since the sixteenth century has there been so splendid an opportunity and so pressing an invitation to study the nature of Catholicism as exhibited in its greatest exponent the Roman Catholic church.

The so-called modernist movement is a very complicated phenomenon, appearing in different forms in Germany, France, Italy, England, and America.² It is not the fruit of any single principle, nor the expression of any single philosophy. The endeavor to embrace it within the compass of a single formula is foredoomed to failure. One may describe with accuracy the positions of some particular modernists, and others may claim with perfect right that the description does not fit them. The situation is the same in the Protestant world. No formula can possibly be invented that will cover all the Protestant liberals of the day, or even any large number of them. Some are moved by one interest, some by another. Some repudiate this feature of the old system, others that. In their constructive work some follow one line of thought, others another, while many do not attempt to construct at all, but content themselves wholly with criticism, Biblical and historical. It is as difficult to describe Roman Catholic modernism as it is to describe Protestant liberalism. The two are the outgrowth of the same general situation, and both reveal the effort, in varying degrees and more or less consciously, to adjust their religious ideas and their theological thinking to the modern world in which they live. Some are historically, others philosophically or theologically or socially or politically, interested. All are more or less out of sympathy with

² Books and articles dealing with the movement are very numerous and are continually appearing. Among them the brief work by Holl, *Modernismus*, 1908, in the *Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher*, and the longer work by Kübel, *Geschichte der Katholischen Modernismus*, 1909, are perhaps the best general accounts. Lilley's *Modernism: a Record and Review*, 1908, is also useful, especially for its bibliography; and some of the writings of the Abbé Houtin are particularly important for the growth of the movement in France (*L'Américanisme*, 1904; *La question biblique chez les catholiques de France au XIX^e siècle* 1902; *La question biblique au XX^e siècle*, 1906; *La crise du clergé*, 1907). For Italy the *Lettere di un prete modernista* (Rome, 1908) is instructive.

traditional modes of thought and traditional ways of looking at things, and the common interest that binds them all together, if there be any such, and justifies us in speaking of a common movement, is the desire to bring about a better adjustment between Christianity and the modern world. Roman Catholic modernism cannot possibly be understood unless it be brought into intimate connection with similar tendencies within Protestantism. The modernists may protest, and with perfect right, against being identified with Protestant liberals. But, fundamental as are the differences that separate them, Catholic modernists as well as Protestant liberals are children of the modern age, and both feel in their own peculiar way the influence of modern tendencies. The new scientific spirit, the new historical sense and the new methods of historical criticism, the new psychological interest, the new emphasis on evolution, the new estimate of nature and the supernatural, in general the new way of looking at the universe, all this has made itself felt within Catholic as well as Protestant circles, and the result has been similar in both. The effects have naturally been present more widely and for a longer time within Protestantism than within Catholicism. It was easier for the new spirit to penetrate the former than the latter. Not only was the one divided and unorganized, while the other was a compact and centralized whole, but the one was, at least in theory, a child of the modern age and open to its influences, while the other was in theory irrevocably bound to an ancient past.

But what has long been happening in Protestantism has now begun to happen in Catholicism. The new spirit has not only penetrated the church but it has come to conscious and vigorous expression, and the result is controversy and condemnation in the one case as in the other. To regard the Roman Catholic modernists as mere followers or imitators of liberal Protestants would be grossly unjust. Influence of one kind and another there may have been, but the modernists are Catholics, not Protestants, and they have read the message of the modern age in the r own way. Its spirit has spoken as directly to them as to any Protestant, and by training and temperament they have been fitted to learn from it lessons that no genuine Protestant

could have understood. They have been accused of crypto-protestantism or of being only Protestants in disguise. The Roman Catholic authorities have denounced them as wolves in sheep's clothing, and Protestants have wondered why they do not come out of the old church and throw in their fortunes with one or another Protestant sect. But this means a complete misunderstanding of their attitude, even more complete than has been widely manifested in connection with various Protestant liberals who have happened to be members of conservative denominations. Both by orthodox and radicals they, too, have been denounced because they did not withdraw and go where they belonged. But they believed they belonged where they were, and even more emphatically it may be said that the Roman Catholic modernists believe themselves to belong in the bosom of Mother Church. They count themselves still loyal, faithful, and devout Catholics. Their reading of Christianity in the light of the modern spirit has not, they think, made them Protestants. On the contrary it has made them more truly Catholic than ever; and why then should they go out? Are they not called rather to minister the new light and the new life to the church to which with heart and soul they belong? Only as we appreciate and sympathize with their attitude in this matter can we understand them and do them justice at other points.

We must distinguish Catholic modernists and Protestant liberals from those, of whom there are many, who have been driven by the influence of modern thought to break altogether with Christianity, or at any rate with the Christian church; who have recognized the lack of harmony between the old and the new, but, instead of trying to readjust or reconstruct, have simply given the thing up and turned to other interests, believing readjustment and reconstruction impossible or not worth while. The religious views of some of these men may be not unlike those of modernists and liberals, but their attitude toward Christianity and the church is very different, and the two classes must not be confounded. The modernists are within the church, not without it, and they apparently propose to remain within it, believing that Catholic Christianity is essentially in harmony with modern thought and has a message for

the modern world. Had their attitude been other than this, had they recognized a necessary incompatibility between their own views and Catholic Christianity and withdrawn from the Catholic church, no controversy would have resulted. It is because they have remained within, and have thereby challenged the traditional view of the nature of Christianity and of the church, that the conflict has come.

What, then, is the controversy about? What are the positions of the modernists at which the Roman Catholic authorities have chiefly taken offence? In the famous papal encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* of September, 1907, there is an elaborate description of the modernist views against which the encyclical is aimed. It has been denounced by leading modernists as utterly unjust. In the very nature of the case any summary of such a complex movement must be unsatisfactory, particularly to the representatives of the movement itself. And yet an impartial observer can hardly fail to recognize that the encyclical contains on the whole an admirable diagnosis of the situation. The account, to be sure, is too schematic. Too much emphasis is laid on philosophy and too little on historical criticism. The theological opinions of perhaps no single modernist are accurately reflected in the document, and certainly much less than justice is done to the personal motives of those condemned. But a number of tendencies which have made themselves felt in one and another way and in greater or less degree in the thinking of many modernists are here depicted, in spite of some exaggeration and of a natural lack of sympathy, with adequate correctness on the whole.

Many replies to the encyclical have been written by modernists. Among them Abbé Loisy's *Simples réflexions*, the anonymous *Lendemains d'encyclique*, and, most important of all, because of the clear and systematic presentation of the matters in which the modernists themselves are chiefly interested, the *Programme of Modernism*, which appeared anonymously in Italian and has been translated into English and widely circulated.

The modernist movement, as has been said, is a very complicated thing and comprehends a great variety of interests and opinions. At the same time there are certain positions, inti-

mately related to each other and representing a common spirit, which appear and reappear in modernist writings. Among them are such as the following, to which I can only refer in passing.

First of all, Biblical and historical criticism. Undoubtedly this had much to do with the inception of the movement, although its influence is perhaps somewhat exaggerated by Loisy and the authors of the *Programme of Modernism* and of *Le-demain d'encyclique*. In the field of literary and historical criticism some of the modernists are as radical as any of our leading Protestant scholars.³ The Bible is taken to be a record of religious experience, and its value thought to lie not in its infallibility and dogmatic authority but in the fact that it induces religious faith and life in us.⁴

The old idea of fixity and permanence in the religious and theological realm has been displaced by the idea of growth and development. Where the traditionalists have a closed system, the modernists are commonly standing for change and progress.⁵ In general it may be said that the modern dynamic conception of the universe has taken the place of the static conception.

God is widely thought of as immanent in man and the world, and the old contrast between the natural and the supernatural tends to disappear altogether.⁶ Accordingly, the external and mechanical idea of revelation is abandoned, and religious truth is conceived not as something given from without but discovered through human experience.⁷

³ Compare for instance the numerous writings of the Abbé Loisy and some of the historical works of the Abbé Duchesne; also the brief summary in the *Programme of Modernism*, pp. 23 f.

⁴ Loisy, *Simples réflexions*, pp. 47 f., *Quelques lettres*, pp. 145 f.; *Programme of Modernism*, pp. 59 f.

⁵ Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church* (English translation of *L'évangile et l'église*), pp. 166 f., 214 f.; LeRoy, *Dogme et critique*, pp. 275 f., 355 f. It is worthy of remark that the philosophy of Henri Bergson has had large influence over the thinking of some of the French modernists, notably LeRoy.

⁶ Loisy, *Quelques lettres*, pp. 45 f., 149 f.; Laberthonnière, *Essais de philosophie religieuse* and *Le réalisme chrétien et l'idéalisme grec*, pp. 106 f.

⁷ Loisy, *Autour d'un petit livre*, pp. 195 f., *Simples réflexions*, pp. 61, 159; LeRoy, *Dogme et critique*, pp. 63 f.; Laberthonnière, *Le réalisme chrétien*, pp. 104 f.; *Programme of Modernism*, pp. 92 f.

Dogmas are considered true only in so far as they express facts of vital religious experience, and their value is made to depend upon their practical bearing on the moral and religious life.⁸

Some have felt the influence of Kantian epistemology, and recognize that by ordinary rational processes we cannot penetrate to the reality back of phenomena.⁹ A more or less thoroughgoing relativism is thus not uncommon.¹⁰ The organ of religious knowledge is sometimes said to be faith,¹¹ sometimes the moral will,¹² in close agreement with Kant himself, with Fichte, Ritschl, and pragmatists in general.

Most of the modernists emphasize the social element in religion, laying stress upon solidarity over against individualism. In this connection much is made of the Kingdom of God.¹³

Finally, all are opposed to absolutism in religion and consequently to Roman Catholic ultramontanism.¹⁴

In all of these matters we recognize a striking similarity to tendencies widely felt in Protestant churches as well, and it is quite evident that the modernists are children of their age as truly as any of our Protestant liberals. It is certainly not to be wondered at that they have been denounced by their Roman Catholic brethren and condemned by the ecclesiastical authorities. Even in Protestant churches similar positions have caused similar trouble, and the situation must necessarily be more acute in the Roman Catholic church. Some of the positions are of a sort to undermine the whole Catholic system,

⁸ Loisy, *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 200; LeRoy, l. c. pp. 25 f.; Laberthonnière, *Essais de philosophie religieuse*, pp. 272 f.

⁹ Loisy, l. c. p. 10; *Programme of Modernism*, p. 110; *Lendemains d'encyclique*, p. 49.

¹⁰ LeRoy, l. c. p. 355.

¹¹ *Programme of Modernism*, pp. 110 f.; Tyrrell, *External Religion*, pp. 148 f.

¹² LeRoy, l. c. pp. 133 f.

¹³ Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, pp. 59, 209 f., *Simples réflexions*, p. 124; Tyrrell, *Medievalism*, p. 74; Williams: Newman, Pascal, Loisy, and the Catholic Church, pp. 233 f.

¹⁴ Loisy, *Quelques lettres*, pp. 140 f.; *Programme of Modernism*; *Lendemains d'encyclique*; and the numerous passages quoted below from Tyrrell's writings.

and hostility to them is by no means necessarily a sign of ultramontanism and reaction.

The controversy has brought to light a fundamental difference touching the theory of the church and its authority, and it is this which particularly concerns us, for it is in connection with it that the genius of Catholicism most clearly reveals itself. This difference constitutes the heart of the whole matter, and it is because it has emerged in the course of the controversy that the conflict has more than a merely temporary significance. The question is not primarily whether this or that historical and theological opinion is in accord with the teaching of the church and may be tolerated within it, but what is the nature, the extent, the seat of ecclesiastical authority. This is a much more important and far-reaching matter.

The issue appears perhaps most clearly and sharply in the writings of the Englishman George Tyrrell, one of the best known of the modernists and until recently a member of the Society of Jesus.¹⁵

The first point of difference between him and the Roman Catholic rulers is the authority of the papacy. He takes sharp issue in his book entitled *Medievalism*, published in 1908, with what he calls "the new-fangled dictatorial conception of the papacy" (p. 38). That conception he sums up in the following words: "The Pope *is* the Church. To him alone Christ has committed the apostolic mission, the deposit of revelation, the plenitude of doctrinal authority and of spiritual power and jurisdiction. Him alone he has commissioned to teach and sanctify, not the world, but the bishops, the clergy, the faithful: 'Feed my sheep; feed my lambs.' If the episcopal or clerical sheep have any doctrinal or spiritual power over the lambs it is as mere delegates of the Pope, as streams deriving from that single fountain of all supernatural life and teaching. The shepherd is no part of his flock. He stands outside and above it as a being of another and higher species. They are absolutely passive and receptive under his guidance. They have no mind or will of their own singly or collectively" (p. 58).

¹⁵ Since this lecture was delivered, Father Tyrrell has died, to the great sorrow of a large circle of friends and admirers, Protestant as well as Catholic.

The ultramontane conception, accurately described in these words, Tyrrell denounces as uncatholic and heretical, because individualistic and opposed to the collectivity of true Catholicism. And over against it he sets the theory of the authority of the episcopate. "The promises made to Peter were made to every Apostle and bishop as such; and in the early centuries every bishop regarded himself as successor of Peter and heir of those promises. Formerly a bishop was the highest ecclesiastical official in his own diocese. He was answerable to no other official, but only to the universal Church of which he was the organ or officer. But now that your new theology has concentrated the universal Church into the person of the Pope, we have a sort of double episcopate in each diocese—the bishop of Rome and the local bishop, the latter being merely the delegate or Vicar-General of the former. Of this system there is not a trace in the first six centuries of Church History, from which we learn that the Pope is neither over the bishops as their master, nor under them as their delegate, but alongside of them as first in the rank of his brethren" (p. 61).

This historical statement is perfectly correct, and in opposing the theory of episcopal authority to the papal absolutism of the ultramontanists Tyrrell is true to the prevailing conception of the early Catholic church, and has with him a large and highly respectable body of theologians in all the centuries since. The division of opinion is an old one. The theory of papal absolutism was developed during the Middle Ages under influences which cannot be recounted here, but it never received universal recognition, and at Trent the opposition to it was so strong that the council adjourned without promulgating any dogma whatever upon the church, although the Protestants' theory of the church was their chief heresy in the eyes of the Catholics. The Society of Jesus stood consistently for papal absolutism, and scored its great triumph at the Vatican Council of 1870, when the dogma of papal infallibility, taught already by Thomas Aquinas and long widely believed among the faithful, was finally promulgated.

The Vatican decree runs in part as follows: "We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed, that the Roman

pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith and morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves irreformable and not because of the consent of the Church."

This is very explicit and thoroughgoing, and yet like most conciliar decisions it admits, or at any rate has received, a double interpretation. Tyrrell says: "The Council tells us that the infallibility of the Pope is not other than that which belongs to the whole Church. This may mean either that the Church is said to be infallible only because she possesses an infallible Pope . . . or it may mean that the Pope—like the Council—speaks *ex cathedra* and infallibly only when and so far as he truly represents and utters the general mind of the Church" (p. 86).

The former was undoubtedly the meaning of those who framed the decree and of the majority of the council in adopting it. But the latter, which has been the interpretation of many that have accepted the dogma, brings it more into line with the ancient conciliar theory which conceived the collective episcopate assembled in oecumenical council to be an infallible mouth-piece of divine truth. This was not repudiated but rather confirmed by the Vatican decree, which was itself a conciliar decree. And in view of the explicit declaration of the council, that "the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter in order that by his revelation they might make known new doctrine," it cannot fairly be denied that the second interpretation is legitimate, even though it does not agree with the intention of the framers of the decree. It has not, indeed, hitherto been the interpretation of the Roman authorities under Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X. On the contrary, the tendency has been all in the opposite, or ultramontane, direction,—to magnify more and more the authority of the Pope at the expense of the bishops. But it is entirely conceivable that the

other interpretation may ultimately prevail within the Roman Catholic church without leading to a repudiation or revision of the Vatican dogma. Any Pope may so interpret his own infallibility if he pleases. And even now, one who stands for this interpretation rather than for the ultramontane cannot fairly be accused of disloyalty and heresy, even though he suffer excommunication.

But this is not the only point at issue. If it were, the situation would be simple, and the modernists might well hope for ultimate victory. As a matter of fact the difference is far more fundamental. Tyrrell, for instance, goes further, and interprets the authority of the bishops as resting upon the authority of the people as a whole, the collective children of God. Thus he says: "What we really bow to is a Divine Tradition of which the entire Church, and not merely the episcopate, is the organ and depositary" (p. 54). "Tradition is the faith that lives in the whole Church and is handed down from generation to generation, of which the entire body, and not a mere handful of officials, is the depositary and organ of transmission. Of this rule and law the Holy Spirit diffused in the hearts of all the faithful is the author; the episcopate merely the servant, the witness, the interpreter" (pp. 55 f.)¹⁶.

Is this a correct reading of the Catholic principle of authority? To answer the question we have to go as far back as the second century. Over against the heretics of that period Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus, commonly known as Old Catholic Fathers, set up a theory of external authority upon which the historic Catholic church was built. In primitive days dependence upon the Holy Spirit, present in the hearts of all believers, was commonly supposed to be adequate protection against false teaching and evil living, but the spread of gnosticism and kindred errors had convinced at any rate the theologians mentioned that something more definite and decisive was needed if the church were not to be completely overwhelmed and the simple faith of the gospel forever lost. In this emergency they appealed to the teaching of the apostles as perma-

¹⁶ Cf. Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, pp. 175 f.; and Williams, *l. c.* pp. 224 f., 290, 294, 304 f.

nently normative, and insisted that all would-be Christian truth must be tested by it. But where was the teaching of the apostles to be found? In answer to this question recourse was had to apostolic writings, which now came to be recognized as constituting an authoritative Biblical canon, and to apostolic rules of faith, in which it was claimed that the essential features of the teaching of the apostles were summarized for the use of the church. But neither of these standards proved adequate to the emergency. The apostolic writings were susceptible of diverse interpretations, and for the current rules of faith there was no sufficient guarantee of apostolic authorship. In this situation Irenaeus took his stand upon the doctrine of the authority of the bishops as successors of the apostles. They were in possession of a divine charisma, received from the apostles, which enabled them to transmit and interpret apostolic truth. To them recourse was to be had in all cases of dispute. They and they alone were in a position to determine beyond question the mind and will of the apostles. The very essence of this theory of episcopal authority was that it erected a standard external to the Christian populace in general. To cut off the appeal either to the individual or the common Christian consciousness was what Irenaeus was concerned to do. It was not the divergence of individual gnostics from the universal sentiment of the church that made the trouble, but the divergence of multitudes and the formation of sects, in some cases approximately as large as the Catholic churches themselves. It was not common consent that Irenaeus appealed to, the appeal would have been futile and ineffective, but episcopal authority. Because the bishops were in this matter independent of their flocks and in direct connection with the apostles, they could declare in a final and authoritative manner, and if necessary against all other Christians, the will and truth of God.

Side by side with this theory of episcopal authority was growing the notion of the church as an institution offering to men through the sacraments the divine grace needed to transform their fallen and corrupt natures and make them heirs of eternal life. Apostolic succession, involving the transmission to the bishops of the grace necessary to enable them to mediate apos-

tolic truth, had been emphasized in the conflict with the heretics. It came now to be believed that the power of communicating the grace necessary for salvation had also been intrusted to them. According to Cyprian, who states the theory most clearly, the divine grace without which no one can be saved is in the hands of the bishops alone, and only they themselves or those whom they have empowered thereto can mediate this grace to others. Inasmuch as the church is the saving institution which supplies this needed grace to fallen and lost humanity, the bishops are themselves the church. The church is not the multitude of Christian people, or of followers of Jesus Christ; it is an organization providing them with salvation. The power which enables the bishop to mediate saving grace to men comes not from the people whose ruler he is, but from the apostles whose successor he is. And similarly the power to utter and interpret apostolic truth comes not from the people but from the apostles. This independence of the clergy over against the laity is of the very essence of the historic Catholic conception of the church. The steps by which it attained to universal recognition cannot be traced here. The process indeed is not wholly clear, but the fact is abundantly evident. The only guarantee of the possession by the church of saving grace and of apostolic truth has been recognized throughout all the centuries from the third to the twentieth to lie in the connection of its episcopate with the apostolate. To make this connection depend in any way upon the will of the laity, to make the laity in any way the medium or instrument by which grace is conveyed either for the one or the other purpose, is to overturn Catholicism completely, Greek as well as Roman. It is just at this point that Luther took sharp issue with the Catholic church of his day. The right of private judgment was but an incident, and to make that the whole of Protestantism is to misunderstand the situation. Back of and beneath that was the denial that the mediation of saving grace is confined to the clergy, and by consequence that they alone know the mind and will of God. The Reformers were condemned as heretics not because they repudiated this or that doctrine of the Catholic system, but because they struck at the very root of Catholicism in as-

serting the universal priesthood of believers and the direct access of every Christian to the fountain of divine grace and truth. The fundamental thing in Protestantism is not anti-collectivism but anti-sacerdotalism. To put oneself on the side of the laity against the hierarchy, to make the latter depend upon the former, to base the claim of the bishops to be the depositary of either saving grace or divine truth upon their relation to the people instead of upon their relation to the apostles is essential Protestantism.

Much, then, as we might wish that Tyrrell's interpretation of episcopal infallibility would find general acceptance within the Roman Catholic church, we cannot fail to see that it would mean the abandonment of an underlying principle of Catholicism which has controlled the Catholic church for more than sixteen centuries, and the adoption of a fundamental plank of Protestantism. This it is difficult to believe can happen.

But Tyrrell goes still further in the matter of authority, and claims that even the agreement of all Christian people, including popes and bishops, is not a guarantee of infallibility. In a private letter, the appearance of portions of which in an Italian journal led to his expulsion from the Society of Jesus, and which has since been published with an introduction and notes in a volume entitled *A Much-Abused Letter*, Tyrrell says: "It seems to me that a man might have great faith in the Church, in the people of God, in the unformulated ideas, sentiments, and tendencies at work in the great body of the faithful, and constituting the Christian and Catholic 'spirit'; and yet regard the Church's consciously formulated ideas and intentions about herself as more or less untrue to her deepest nature; that he might refuse to believe her own account of herself as against his instinctive conviction of her true character; that he might say to her: 'Nescitis cujus spiritus estis'—'You know not your own essential spirit'" (pp. 56 f.). And in the volume on *Medievalism* already quoted he says, "I ask myself whether a consensus in purely theological matters could ever possibly be more than that of a mere handful of experts; whether the general acquiescence of the crowd can have the slightest confirmatory value, any more than that of a class of schoolboys can be said

to confirm the teachings of their master" (pp. 81 f.). In other words, in the last analysis the religious experience of those truly Christian, and of those alone, is the only competent and adequate authority. "A general consensus of the faithful," he says, "can only obtain in regard to those matters where all may be experts; matters within the potential experience of each; matters which interest and affect their daily spiritual life—the life of Faith in virtue of which they are called 'the faithful.'" "If Faith were theology its problems could never be settled by general consensus. But because it is not theology, but the Gospel, because its object is that life of which Christ is the Divine Revelation, and not the analysis of that life, every believer may, as an expert, speak of his own personal response to the Gospel. Each is a judge of faith; and the agreement of all is an infallible judgment, eliminating private errors and idiosyncrasies" (p. 82).

Perhaps not all Protestants, but certainly many of them, would have no quarrel with such a statement as this. Its agreement indeed with the position of the great reformer Luther is very striking. In his *Exposition of John 17* (Erlangen edition, vol. 50, p. 304) Luther says: "It is true that the Christian church cannot err. But listen, dear friend, and take notice what the true Christian church is. They, indeed, say that the Pope is the head of the church. Nevertheless they cannot deny that the Pope has erred dreadfully. But if the head has erred, the body easily follows. . . . But do you on the contrary say, 'Whoever cleaves to Christ cannot err; whoever does not must err even if he be more than a Pope.'" And what he means by not erring is made abundantly evident where he distinguishes, as he does over and over again, between theology and the fundamental truths of Christian experience. Where there are true Christians, there is a common and infallible knowledge of the forgiving love of God in Christ. This is in essence exactly the position of Tyrrell, though his interpretation of the central content of Christian truth may be different. Tyrrell's agreement with Luther is still more apparent in such passages as the following from his *Much-Abused Letter*: "After all, the visible Church (unlike the invisible) is but a means, a

way, a creature, to be used where it helps, to be left where it hinders. It is not the Kingdom of Heaven, but only its herald and servant" (p. 86). "Faith is not a sharing in the common creed of the visible Church, but in the common vision of the invisible Church which is, in a measure, that of God Himself" (p. 81).

This is true and beautiful, but it is at bottom Protestantism, not Catholicism, and in repudiating it the Catholic authorities are acting not in accordance with an uncompromising ultramontanism but with the underlying principles of Catholicism as it has existed from the second century to the present day. It is true that the modernists do not stand alone among Catholics in their emphasis upon Christian experience as the ultimate source and standard of Christian truth. They have upon their side a long line of pious souls, commonly known as mystics, who have looked within rather than without for revelations of the divine. And the theory has always existed, even outside of mystical circles, that the truth taught by the church is harmonious with the individual experience of all true Christians, so that it can be assimilated and given a vital place in their religious life. The Catholic principle of authority therefore must not be interpreted too externally and mechanically, and if the Roman hierarchy and the Roman church at large shall be led to realize this more clearly than they do it will be a great victory for the modernists and a great gain for Catholicism everywhere. But it must be recognized that in the last analysis the authority not of individual believers or of the totality of believers but of the official ecclesiastical institution is on genuine Catholic principles supreme. If this has not always clearly appeared, it is because the personal experience of Catholic Christians has commonly fallen naturally into line with the Catholic tradition in which they were trained, and expressed itself easily in accepted religious formulae. When a divergence of any importance has appeared, the church has always, consistently with its age-long principle of authority, insisted upon conformity. Cardinal Mercier's words in his Lenten Pastoral of 1908 reproduce that principle roughly and mechanically, to be sure, but, on the whole, with substantial accuracy. "The Christian," he says, "is one who trusts the

teaching of the Church and accepts sincerely the doctrines she proposes for his belief. He who repudiates or questions her authority, and by consequence rejects one or more of the truths she compels him to believe, cuts himself off from the ecclesiastical community." "Catholicism says that the Christian Faith is communicated to the faithful by an official organ of transmission—the Catholic episcopate—and that it is based on the acceptance of the authority of that organ." "The Church, as a supernatural society, is essentially a positive and external institution, and must be accepted by its members as organized by her Divine Founder. It belongs to Christ Himself to dictate His will to us." "The bishops continue the apostles' mission. The faithful must hear them, believe their teaching, and obey them under pain of eternal damnation."¹⁷ This is not ultramontanism, it is Catholicism, Greek and Roman. For the essence of Catholicism, as it has existed ever since the second century, in a true sense as it has existed ever since the Apostle Paul, is the conception of a salvation given from without. Man is radically bad and utterly helpless, and only as supernatural grace is bestowed upon him from above can he escape destruction and win eternal life. The idea of the Church as a saving institution external to its members and independent of them, and the idea of this external institution as authoritative in the religious sphere, were inevitable consequences. The modernists have repudiated this ancient, even apostolic, conception of salvation and have denominated it mediaevalism, though the Middle Ages inherited it from a much older past. It is therefore not to be wondered at that the principle of authority which was built upon it should also go by the board. The truth is that not the mediaeval church alone but the ancient church from Paul down stood under the dominance of a philosophy upon which modern men have generally turned their backs. Historic Protestantism is in this respect in much the same situation as historic Catholicism. In Protestantism, too, the old realistic views of philosophy and the old external and mechanical idea of revelation and of divine activity in general have commonly been in control. But there is this great difference

¹⁷ Quoted by Tyrrell, *Mediaevalism*, pp. 4, 7, 14, 15.

that at the very beginning Protestantism denied the traditional theory of the church as an institution external to and above its members, upon which they must depend for saving grace and truth. This was not all that should in consistency have been repudiated, and the old that was left remained to trouble Protestantism and to keep it bound to the past long after the new age had dawned. But the partial break, incomplete and in many respects ineffective as it was, has made other breaks easy, and modern Protestantism, unlike as it is to the older Protestantism, is yet not fundamentally untrue to it, while an equally modern Catholicism breaks with the Catholicism of all the past just at its most characteristic point.

Why, then, do the modernists remain Catholic? Why do they not withdraw from the Roman church and enter some Protestant communion? The Catholic authorities are continually accusing them of being Protestants at heart. Thus Cardinal Mercier traces the whole movement to Protestant influence, and declares that "in itself the idea, which first inspired many generous champions of Catholic apologetics and caused them to fall into Modernism, is at root identical with that Protestant individualism which is substituted for the Catholic conception of a teaching authority officially established by Jesus Christ, and commissioned to tell us what, under pain of eternal damnation, we are compelled to believe" (*ibid.*, p. 11).

Against the accusation of being an individualist Tyrrell strongly and justly protests in his reply to the Cardinal, and it is because he interprets Protestantism as the Cardinal does, as thoroughgoing individualism, that he finds it impossible to be a Protestant. He remains a Catholic because Catholicism means to him collectivity over against individualism, unity over against separatism, the social principle in religion over against the atomistic.¹⁸ Upon this he lays the greatest stress also in his *Much-Abused Letter*, coming back to it over and over again. Thus he says: "Communion with the visible Church, with those, namely, who *profess* to be Christ-like, is a great *desideratum*, is a condition of more fruitful communion with the invisible.

¹⁸ See also Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, p. 209; and Williams: *Newman, Pascal, Loisy, and the Catholic Church*, pp. 296 f.

For, besides the more obvious reasons which will occur to everyone, there is a depth, height, width, and fulness added to our inward life by our conscious and sympathetic association with a great world-wide cause or work such as that of Catholicism; something analogous to the spiritual expansion produced in us by an intelligent, self-sacrificing, and active participation in the life of our state or country. If God's cause on earth should be championed by each individual, it is certainly rational that, like other causes, it should be championed by a society; not merely by knights errant, but by an organized army. In the Catholic Church, God's cause on earth, the cause of Christianity, of Religion in its highest development, finds its visible embodiment and instrument" (p. 63).

This is doubtless the secret of many a modernist's remaining in the Roman Catholic communion, though he finds himself so completely out of sympathy with some of its principles and practices. But is this necessarily a distinguishing feature of Catholicism as contrasted with Protestantism? Is the latter inevitably individualistic, and is the kind of unity Tyrrell speaks of, unity of effort for the promotion of the cause of Christ, impossible to it? The modernists' criticisms of existing Protestant individualism are well taken. The history of Protestantism abundantly justifies their estimate of it, and, the situation being what it is, it is not strange that they should find it utterly uncongenial. But is the situation permanently necessary? It is to be noticed that the modernists are not seeking an external authority upon which they may throw themselves, and so find release from religious doubt and uncertainty. To those who feel this need Roman Catholicism offers what no other system can. This is the need which has driven many a troubled spirit into it from St. Augustine to John Henry Newman. But for fellowship in Christian life and work an institution like the Roman Catholic church is not indispensable. Its hierarchical principles and its external infallibility, which are of its very essence, are at best indifferent to such fellowship, at worst a hindrance and a bar, as the present situation abundantly shows.

What the modernists desire, and the desire is a noble one, is world-wide unity of purpose and of effort for the promotion

of the Kingdom of God on earth. As Tyrrell says, the mission of the church "is to impress upon every man the duty of living, not for himself, but for the common good, for the Kingdom of God, according to the opportunities of his station; to kindle in each that fire of self-devotion which Christ came to kindle upon earth; to stimulate faith, hope, and enthusiasm in the cause of an Ideal before whose immensity and remoteness the unaided spirit grows weary and discouraged. For without such faith and hope who could struggle for the reign of truth and justice upon earth?" (*Medievalism*, p. 74.)

This kind of unity, unity of purpose and of effort in a common cause, has laid hold also upon the imagination of many Protestants. The plans for organic church-unity which were so vigorously prosecuted in various quarters a few years ago, bear testimony to it perhaps only in part; but the many practical efforts at coöperation which we are to-day witnessing on every side are abundant proof of it. The extreme individualism and competition of an earlier day are giving way in religious work as in every other kind of work. It does not necessarily indicate a growing agreement in theological opinion, but it indicates the recognition that another kind of oneness is far more important, a oneness of purpose and of effort in labor for the good of humanity. Such oneness many Protestants believe is entirely possible on Protestant principles. Collectivism of this kind, they claim, is as truly Protestant as individualism. If without an infallible doctrinal authority which shall compel all Christians to a common faith it is impossible to unite them in effort for a common purpose, then such Protestants are wrong. But if, on the other hand, it is true that without the pressure of any such external authority men can be united in devotion to a common cause, and that such devotion will itself create all needed unity of faith, then Protestantism has its permanent justification and its lasting task. Whatever the modernists' actual attitude toward Protestantism may be, it is this latter alternative for which they stand. They, too, like many modern Protestants, believe that all needed unity of purpose and of effort may be attained without the pressure of an external authority and without such theological agreement as an external authority alone can dictate.

Another reason why modernists cling to Catholicism and find Protestantism so little to their liking is because they interpret Protestantism as teaching the absolute and permanent authority of the Scriptures, and so as preventing all real freedom and development in religious thought.¹⁹ They stand, over against this narrow and external interpretation of religious authority, for the rights of the religious experience of Christians of all ages. It is because Protestantism is too conservative and too authoritarian that they find themselves out of sympathy with it; Catholicism they believe is essentially progressive and modern in this matter. Their attitude is very instructive. It is identical with the attitude of many modern Protestants, of whom the great theologian Schleiermacher was the most eminent and influential. Indeed, the identity of interest and of emphasis at this point, as at many other points, between Schleiermacher and the Roman Catholic modernists is very striking. It is simply another indication of the oneness of spirit which largely controls modern men of all communions.

Still another aspect of Protestantism that makes it uncongenial to the modernists is its unhistorical character. It is divided from the larger part of the Christian world not only locally but temporally. In the Catholic church the Christian feels himself one not merely with a great company of his own day and generation but also with the saints of all the past.²⁰ Here, too, the modernists, like Catholics in general, exaggerate the isolation of Protestantism. Particularly with the revival of the historical spirit and interest in our own times there has grown up within Protestant circles a sense of solidarity with the Christianity of the ancient and middle ages such as our forefathers knew nothing of. And yet the difference is real, and the historic continuity of Catholicism, to which Catholics point as of the very essence of the system, is justly regarded as a possession of great value.

And, moreover, it must be admitted, and this is another fact of tremendous value which Catholics are justified in emphasizing, that hitherto Catholicism has conceived its task much more clearly and given itself to its accomplishment much more

¹⁹ Loisy, *Autour d'un petit livre*, pp. 205 f.

²⁰ Williams, l. c. p. 297.

consistently and unitedly than Protestantism. In the Middle Ages the Catholic church actually set before itself as an ideal the Kingdom of God on earth, and labored manfully for its realization. Its interpretation of the ideal may be criticised. A Kingdom such as it conceived, the dominance of the whole of life by the Roman Catholic church, may seem far from desirable; but at least it was a clear and consistent ideal. Protestantism, on the other hand, has never had any such single ideal, and it is chiefly because of this that its history has been one of controversy, division, and disunion. It is not to be wondered at that the modernists should see in the Roman Catholic church a power for the promotion of the Kingdom of God on earth incomparably superior to any or all of the Protestant sects. The genius of Catholicism is union and coöperation, a common purpose and common labor for its accomplishment. This has been its great strength in the past and continues to be its great strength in the present. This is above all the reason why it binds even the most radical of modernists so closely to itself.

But it is equally the genius of Catholicism to hinge eternal salvation upon dependence on an external institution and submission to its authority. The modernists would separate the one from the other. They would interpret Catholicism as unity but not as authority. If the word Catholic be taken by itself, of course their interpretation is justified. But from the second century down to the present it has had both meanings, and the Roman Catholic church is built even more definitely and explicitly upon the second than upon the first. It may at times have ceased to be a union of all Christians and have gathered into one communion but a pitiful minority. But it remained always, however small in numbers, the one divine institution endowed with saving grace and infallible truth, dependence upon which and submission to which were necessary to salvation.

It is an ideal Catholicism of which the modernists are dreaming—a Catholicism which antedates not only the Middle Ages but the age of the Fathers as well, and carries us back even beyond the Apostle Paul to Jesus himself, just where so many modern Protestants are seeking their Christianity. Whether

one shall call it Catholicism or simply Christianity is perhaps of minor importance. In any case it is neither the Catholicism nor the Protestantism of the past. It is something essentially modern. There are those, both Catholic modernists and Protestant liberals, who believe that it is the Christianity of Christ, and there, if they are indeed right in that belief, lies the great promise for the future—the promise of a wider unity and a more general coöperation than have yet been known, and so of the speedier and better accomplishment of the common task.